



## THE AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
12420 Parklawn Drive, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20857

**Comments of The American Dietetic Association on the Food and Drug Administration's request for comments as published in the July 6, 1999 Federal Register, Volume 64, Number 128: Food Labeling: Safe Handling Statements: Shell Eggs: Refrigeration of Shell Eggs Held for Retail Distribution; (Proposed Rule).**

**FDA Docket No. 98N-1230; 96P-0418; and 97P-0197**

The American Dietetic Association (ADA) represents almost 70,000 food and nutrition professionals serving the public through the promotion of optimal nutrition, health and well-being. ADA appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in response to the FDA Proposed Rule on the labeling of shell eggs. Outbreaks of foodborne illness related to Salmonella microorganisms in shell eggs highlight the importance of setting temperature standards and educating consumers and alerting them to potential risks. The Association believes that easily understood statements on the label can lead to increased consumer awareness and reduced complications associated with unsafe shell eggs.

ADA applauds the agency for their efforts in this important area and fully supports the need for temperature standards and educating consumers on the potential risks of shell eggs. Following are ADA's comments on several of the issues raised in the proposed rule.

1. What are the safety implications in the difference between the proposed temperature of 45 degrees F° for storage at retail and the refrigeration of 41 degrees F° recommended in the Food Code?

ADA understands the scientific basis for establishing the 45 degree F° standard as this seems to be an adequate temperature to control rapid growth of Salmonella Enteritidis microorganisms and is consistent with the US Department of Agriculture, Food Safety Inspection Service requirement that shell eggs packed for consumer use be stored and transported at an ambient temperature that does not exceed 45 degree F°. However, since the FDA Food Code requires products be kept at 41° degrees F for refrigeration, there may be some confusion in retail establishments regarding the two temperatures. ADA supports the proposed 45 degree F° standard but urges the agency and others to communicate effectively to minimize any confusion that may result from this rule.

2. Does the proposed food label convey meaningful information for the consumers in an understandable manner? What specific alternate wording would convey they message more clearly?

**Model Labeling Statement**

Sec. 101.7(h)(1) proposes to require the that the label of shell eggs bear the following statement:

*SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: Eggs may contain harmful bacteria known to cause serious illness, especially in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems. For your protection: keep eggs refrigerated; cook eggs until yolk is firm; and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly before eating.*

ADA commends FDA for developing a message that is non-threatening, simple, and educational in a way that can be easily understood by consumers. ADA does suggest that instead of the word "protection," FDA consider using the word "safety" or "health." The term "For your health" or "For your safety" may be more recognized and understood by consumers.

The type of message being proposed allows other organizations, like ADA, to then provide more detailed guidance on safe refrigeration temperatures, specific cooking instructions, and post-preparation handling and storage procedures. The statement is generic enough to serve all consumers, yet can be tailored to meet the needs of specific population, such as HIV positive individuals and the elderly. This type of message is also consistent with ADA's Consumer Food Safety campaign aimed at educating consumers about the importance of home food safety practices.

ADA also supports the proposed requirement to apply the temperature and labeling standards across the board to shell eggs that are produced, processed, and packed for in-state and interstate commerce.

ADA commends FDA for their efforts in addressing this important public health concern and looks forward to continuing to educate and advise consumers in this arena.

Sincerely,



F. Ann Gallagher, RD, CD, LD  
President

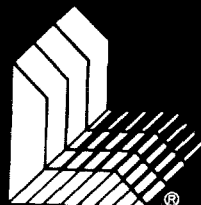
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
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See Docket Number/Item Code: 97P-0197/C645  
96P-0418/C644



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